Wisconsin and the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Mathematics:

What are the Common Core State Standards?

Since 2010, 45 states and the District of Columbia have adopted the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), a set of consistent English language arts and mathematics expectations for what students should know and be able to do in kindergarten through 12th grade. Each state made its local decision to adopt after opportunities to review drafts and voice feedback. Wisconsin was well poised to adopt the CCSS in June of 2010, leveraging the involvement of statewide English language arts and mathematics educator leadership teams in the review process, and gaining statewide support through multiple stakeholder events held in the spring of 2010.

The CCSS are rigorous, internationally-benchmarked English language arts and mathematics standards that are designed to ensure that students leave school with the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in college and careers. The CCSS are NOT a national or state curriculum nor are they federally mandated. They were developed by a team of experts, educators and stakeholders in a process led by the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers. Since 2010, the CCSS have garnered support from business, professional, advocacy, and policy stakeholders, and also have the support of national parent organizations.

How will Wisconsin assess the Common Core State Standards?

States will select an aligned assessment to the CCSS where scores will be available sooner than ever before, providing parents and teachers the ability to intervene quickly and support struggling students. Wisconsin's selected state assessment must match the academic demands of the CCSS, reflect the instructional shifts evident in the CCSS, and measure college and career readiness. To that end, Wisconsin is committed to an assessment system aligned to the CCSS in both letter and spirit, which will also include a college entrance assessment such as the ACT. Wisconsin will continue to work with Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium to develop a system of multiple assessments at grades 3-11, including formative, interim, and summative tools, as well as resources that will assist with further CCSS implementation.

Why share standards across states?

In 2010, the National Governors Association (NGA) and the Council of State School Officers (CCSSO) recognized the opportunity to clearly define the knowledge and skills that will prepare students for the 21st century workplace and will ensure students are truly college and career ready. Leveraging the

expertise and experience of educators across 48 states was crucial to developing strong standards that meet the needs of all students. Working with state partners on the implementation of the CCSS also helps us to learn from one another, share free and available resources, and support students as they move from state to state.

The CCSS provide this guidance and support, while still maintaining the local control so important to districts throughout the state. Since 2010, Wisconsin has begun to link this system of CCSS, instruction and assessment to school accountability measures, educator effectiveness, and accountability for pre-service educator preparation programs. The CCSS provide the foundation for all of these important systems statewide. Additionally, the CCSS provide a framework to Wisconsin educators for research-based instructional practices that will truly transform student learning. This is a significant opportunity for our state.

Example English language arts and mathematics standards:

Academic standards are expectations for what students should know and be able to do in kindergarten through 12th grade. The Common Core State Standards articulate this knowledge and skills in the areas of English language arts and mathematics.

Example English language arts CCSS from grade 3: Determine the main idea of a text; recount the key details and explain how they support the main idea (Informational Reading, 3.2)

Example mathematics CCSS from grade 6: Fluently add, subtract, multiply, and divide multi-digit decimals using the standard algorithm for each operation. (Number System, 6.3)

Where can I find the CCSS?

There are two places to view and download the CCSS.

Council of Chief State School Officers and National Governors Association sponsored website: www.corestandards.org

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction Common Core State Standards Implementation website:

http://commoncore.dpi.wi.gov/

For up to date Wisconsin CCSS news, resources and opportunities, follow us on Twitter @WisDPICCSS

Common Core State Standards Myths : General

Myth: The CCSS only include skills and do not address the importance of content knowledge.

Fact: The CCSS recognize that both content and skills are important.

In English language arts, the CCSS require certain critical content for all students, including: classic fables and stories from around the world, America's Founding Documents, American literature, and Shakespeare. Appropriately, the crucial decisions about what content should be taught are left to local determination.

In mathematics, the CCSS lay a solid foundation in the four operations of addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division of whole numbers, fractions, and decimals. Taken together, these elements support a student's ability to learn and apply more demanding mathematics concepts and procedures. The middle school and high school CCSS call on students to practice applying mathematical ways of thinking to real world issues and challenges; they prepare students to think and reason mathematically. The CCSS set a rigorous definition of college and career readiness, not by piling topic upon topic, but by demanding that students develop a depth of understanding and ability to apply mathematics to new situations, as college students and employees regularly do.

In addition to English language arts and mathematics, the CCSS require that students systematically acquire knowledge in other disciplines through more reading, writing, speaking, and listening than ever before. To assist with this expectation, Wisconsin's adoption of the CCSS includes the CCSS for Literacy in All Subject Areas. The literacy standards assist content area teachers in teaching deeper and richer content knowledge in all subjects. These standards acknowledge the important role of reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language in developing and communicating content knowledge in ways that deepen understanding. For example, the way a student writes a science lab report is very different than the writing necessary to craft a historical essay with support, or a business letter to a prospective employer. Students need to learn the reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills most relevant to communicating and understanding in each content area, which will lead to better mastery of content across the curriculum.

Myth: The CCSS are not internationally benchmarked.

Fact: International benchmarking played a significant role in the development of the CCSS. In fact, the CCSS include an appendix listing the evidence that was consulted in drafting the CCSS and the international data consulted in the benchmarking process is included in the appendix.

Myths About Implementation

Myth: The CCSS tell teachers what to teach.

Fact: The best understanding of what works in the classroom comes from the teachers who are in the classroom. That's why these standards establish *what* students need to learn, but they do not dictate

how teachers should teach. Instead, individual states, local schools and teachers decide how best to help students reach the CCSS.

Myth: The CCSS amount to a national curriculum for our schools.

Fact: The CCSS are not a curriculum. They are a clear set of expectations for what knowledge and skills will help our students succeed. Local teachers, principals, superintendents and others decide *how* the CCSS are to be met. Teachers continue to devise lesson plans and tailor instruction to the individual needs of the students in their classrooms.

Myth: The federal government will take over ownership of the Common Core State Standards Initiative.

Fact: The federal government does not govern the Common Core State Standards Initiative. The Initiative was and remains a state-led effort supported through the National Governors Association Council of Chief State School Officers. In Wisconsin, all decisions about curriculum and content are made at the local level.

Myth: Implementation of the CCSS will lead to government collection and sharing of private personal and family information via an electronic database.

Fact: Student data are highly protected and our efforts around student data systems fully comply with the law by adopting data privacy and security protections that meet the highest industry standards, exceed federal (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act or FERPA) requirements, and are designed to ensure that student data are used only for agreed-upon education purposes and not further disclosed. In no case would data never be sold to anyone - ever. The data are owned by the districts, and the DPI will protect it according to federal and state laws. No new data collection is required as part of the Common Core State Standards initiative.

Myths About Process

Myth: No teachers were involved in writing the CCSS.

Fact: The standards drafting process relied on teachers and standards experts from across the country. Wisconsin teachers played an important role in the reviewing and release of the standards.

Myth: The CCSS are not research or evidence based.

Fact: The CCSS have made careful use of a large and growing body of evidence. The evidence base includes scholarly research; surveys on what skills are required of students entering college and workforce training programs; assessment data identifying college-and career-ready performance; and comparisons to standards from high-performing states and nations.

In English language arts, the CCSS build on the firm foundation of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) frameworks in Reading and Writing, which draw on extensive scholarly research and evidence. Additionally, the National Reading Panel Report provided guidance to the CCSS, particularly on the Reading Foundations section.

In mathematics, the CCSS draw on recommendations from Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) and other studies of high-performing countries that the traditional mathematics curriculum must become substantially more coherent and focused to improve student achievement, addressing the problem of a curriculum that is "a mile wide and an inch deep."

Myths About Content and Quality: ELA/Literacy

Myth: The CCSS in English Language Arts are just vague descriptions of skills; they don't include a reading list or any other similar reference to content.

Fact: The CCSS provide specific descriptions and qualities of the sufficiently complex texts educators should be using in each grade level. The CCSS provide guidance for teachers, schools, and districts in making decisions about what texts to use. To meet this goal, the CCSS include excerpted sample texts (Appendix B) that demonstrate the level of text complexity appropriate for grade bands. Teachers, schools, and districts understand the learning demands set out in the CCSS, examine the exemplars for text complexity, and make decisions about what texts will best meet the needs of students. Wisconsin has developed high quality materials and processes educators can use to help select complex texts in line with the text complexity outlined in Appendix B. These resources can be found at http://CCSS.dpi.wi.gov/stn_ela-tchingandlrng

Myth: The CCSS do not emphasize fiction/literature. The standards ask English teachers to teach other subject-area texts.

Fact: The CCSS require certain critical content for all students, including: classic fables and stories from around the world, America's Founding Documents, American literature, and Shakespeare. Appropriately, the remaining crucial decisions about what content should be taught are left to local determination. All reading lists and other content decisions are made at the local level in Wisconsin. In addition to content coverage, the CCSS require that students systematically acquire knowledge in literature and other disciplines through reading, writing, speaking, and listening.

Much of the reading done in high school, college and the workforce is informational text. To meet this demand, the CCSS call for students to read increasing amounts of informational text as they move toward college and career readiness. This increased amount of nonfiction reading happens through the texts read in all subject areas, including science, social studies, history, and technical subjects to gain critical content knowledge. Fiction/literature remains a critical part of what is studied in English classrooms. Wisconsin has become a national leader in efforts to ensure all subject areas include reading, writing, speaking and listening activities that are relevant to that subject. For more information

on this effort, called Disciplinary Literacy in Wisconsin, please visit http://standards.dpi.wi.gov/stn_disciplinaryliteracy

Myths About Content and Quality: Mathematics

Myth: The CCSS for mathematics do not prepare or require students to learn Algebra in the 8th grade, as many states' current standards do.

Fact: When fully implemented, the CCSS prepare students for Algebra 1 in 8th grade by including the prerequisites for this course in grades K-7. Students who master the K-7 material with sufficient understanding will be able to take Algebra 1 in 8th grade. At the same time, grade 8 standards are also included; these include rigorous algebra and will transition students effectively into a full Algebra 1 course.

The K-7 standards build a strong foundation where students are actively engaged in learning and understanding the prerequisite skills for a successful transition to higher levels of mathematics. Students who have completed 7th grade and mastered the content and skills throughout the 7th grade will be well prepared for algebra in grade 8. Together, the middle school CCSS are robust and provide a coherent and rich preparation for high school mathematics.

Myth: Key mathematics topics are missing or appear in the wrong grade.

Fact: The mathematical progressions presented in the CCSS are coherent and based on evidence.

Part of the problem with having 50 different sets of state standards is that today, different states cover different topics at different grade levels. Coming to consensus guarantees that from the viewpoint of any given state, topics will move up or down in the grade level sequence. This is unavoidable. What is important to keep in mind is that the progression in the CCSS is mathematically coherent and leads to college and career readiness at an internationally competitive level.

Myth: The CCSS for mathematics do not require students to learn basic math facts.

Fact: The CCSS specify grade levels by which students are expected to be fluent with basic facts. The CCSS set a rigorous definition for a richer acquisition of mathematical content by asking students to apply the mathematics at a deeper level, gain a conceptual understanding of the mathematics while at the same time obtain the speed and fluency of knowing mathematics facts and algorithms (solve for x).